

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 2 and 3 have been amended to more clearly recite aspects of the present invention, claim 4 is canceled, and new claims 5 – 21 have been added to provide a more complete scope of protection for the present invention. The specification has been amended to correct typographical errors. An Information Disclosure Statement and Formal Drawings are being submitted concurrently herewith.

Support for modifications to claim 1 and for new claim 13 is provided in paragraphs [0008] through [0011], [0017] and [0019], and in Fig. 4. Support for new claims 5 and 14 is provided in paragraph [0021]. Support for new claims 6, 9, 15 and 18 is provided in paragraph [0019]. Support for new claims 7 and 16 is provided in paragraph [0020]. Support for new claims 8 and 17 is provided in paragraph [0010]. Support for new claims 10-12 and 19-21 is provided in paragraph [0017]. No new matter is believed to be added to the present application by virtue of this amendment.

In the Office Action, the declaration is stated as being defective. A new declaration is being submitted concurrently herewith that is believed to overcome the defects stated in the Office Action.

The objections to the drawings set forth in the Office Action are believed to be overcome by virtue of the drawing changes submitted concurrently herewith and the proposed corrections to the specification herein. In particular, symbols in Figs. 1, 2

and 3 have been provided with a reference numeral "12" or "14." The typographical error in Fig. 4 has been corrected.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended herein are believed to overcome this basis for rejection of the claims and respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) are being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,604,129, to Slutsman et al (hereinafter referred to as the Slutsman et al patent). As will be discussed in further detail below, Applicants respectfully submit that the Slutsman et al patent fails to teach or suggest several claimed features of the invention.

The Schemers et al patent relates to method and apparatus for a conference call mediation service. As such, it is an application-specific patent. The system disclosed in the present application applies to any type of back end application. The system disclosed in the Slutsman et al patent allows multiple devices to access the same application, but each device interacts with its own session and can only respond to queries made specifically to that device/user. The present application, on the other hand, supports multiple users/devices accessing and responding to the same single query.

More particularly, the Office Action states that "Slutsman teaches that the software system allows for inputs from computer keyboards at the same time while responding with the appropriate outputs." This is not relevant to the present invention

claimed herein. The claims herein do not merely recites a system where multiple devices can interact with an application, but rather recite a system where multiple devices interact with an application in the same session and all of the devices compete in responding to the same query. As recited in claim 1, only one answer or input is accepted among all of the answers (i.e., inputs) that are received.

The Office Action states that the Slutsman et al patent purportedly teaches assignment of a unique identifier to each query. The Slutsman et al patent teaches assignment of a Session-ID to an invitation which identifies the conference and those attributes sent in the conference request. This is equivalent to the conventional solution discussed in paragraph [0006] of the present application in which the query (e.g., invitation) contains the Session-ID and the attributes (e.g., the name of the query). A session-ID, however, merely ensures the conference attendee is interacting with the correct conference session. This solution does not overcome the problems discussed in paragraph [0007] of the present application. Unlike the claimed invention, the Slutsman et al patent does discuss or suggest a solution to the problem of multiple attendees responding to the very same question where the response from only one of the attendees is accepted.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this basis for rejecting the claims is respectfully requested.

The Office Action lists, but does not rely on, a number of patents which will now be briefly discussed. U. S. Patent No. 6,201,859, to Memhard, operates by offering two solutions to the problem of "input competition." One solution is a "free-

for-all” solution (see column 8, lines 13-21 of the Memhard patent), where all inputs from all players are accepted, and the other one is a “turn-taking” solution (see column 8, lines 22-38 of the Memhard patent). Neither one of these methods is close to the invention disclosed here, where all players can provide input, but only one of the inputs is accepted.

U.S. Patent No. 6,748,420, to Quatrano, discloses a system that allows multiple computer user participants to access a single shared session to an application in a collaborative manner. However, the Quatrano patent does not in any way address the problem of “input competition” where multiple respondents attempt to respond to the same query. It discusses how a single session can be shared by multiple users, but not how those users can react to the data that they see.

U.S. Patent No. 6,346,952, to Stivelman, discloses a method for extracting keywords from interactive dialogs in a communication-center chat session. This is not relevant to what is claimed herein.

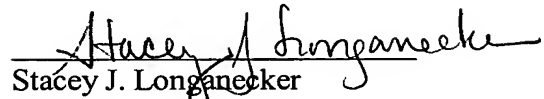
U.S. Patent No. 5,594,859, Palmer et al, discloses a graphical user interface for video teleconferencing in which multiple users can interact in the conference session at the same time. The only interaction that users can take part in is the control of the video image on their desktop. No application sharing or collaborative data application sharing is discussed. This patent therefore is not relevant to what is claimed herein.

In view of the above, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance and notice to this effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner

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have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the
telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,


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